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U.S. House of Representatives

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February 10, 2006

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H - 232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Hastert,

I am writing to express my outrage and deep disappointment with the current controversy over the budget reconciliation spending cut legislation (S. 1932). While there may be few policy items on which we agree these days, our mutual respect for the United States House of Representatives and its critical, Constitutionally-designated role in law-making should be something upon which we can both rely. However, the current problems surrounding enactment of the \$39 billion in spending cuts raise questions that are troubling on a number of levels.

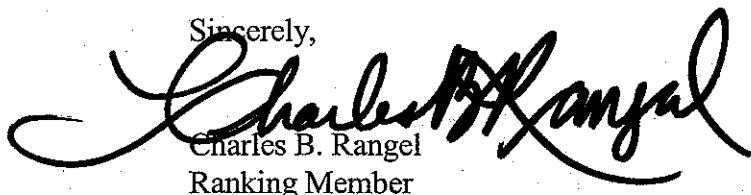
I don't yet know exactly what happened and who is at fault, but it is clear that the legislation signed by the President on Wednesday is not what actually passed the House of Representatives on February 1. Furthermore, the notion that the Senate could allegedly "fix" this problem by passing a resolution that claims to convey "intent" for the entire Congress is unprecedented.

This situation might be understandable, though still deeply troubling, if there had been no knowledge of the problem until after it occurred. But I understand that Republican leadership in both the House and Senate were aware of this problem prior to the final House vote on February 1, and did nothing to prevent it from occurring or to correct it afterward. Instead, a decision was made to change the law en route to the President.

As I recall, this legislation passed both chambers on very close votes. Indeed, the House had to vote twice on the Conference Report. My understanding of the current problem leads me to believe that both chambers may need to vote again on the legislation to correct it. This makes me wonder if the leadership purposely misled the House and the public in order to avoid further consideration of this controversial legislation.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible as to your plans to rectify the situation.

Sincerely,



Charles B. Rangel
Ranking Member